commonly, cream (a tone not too far from yellow) or blue, and they carried repeated floral-cone motifs, the Herati pattern (a dense overall pattern of rosettes), or a central medallion; the pile was close-clipped, which produces clarity of design. A pre-1890 Ferahan rug was usually rather long in relation to its width; somewhat later ones, such as Wolfe’s, followed Western preferred dimensions; such rugs began to be sold in the West around 1875. It is of considerable interest to learn from Ford (p. 94) that Ferahan carpets came from an area to the south of the Kharaghan villages and, though finer, share characteristics with Karaghangs. A Farahan/Feraghan could, then, perhaps be confused with a Kharaghan/Kheraghan! Thus, the same office carpet could conceivably be referred to by either name (the orthographic difference between Keraghan vs. Kharaghan is also seen in the rug literature and so seems not to signify).

Note the colors mentioned above for Kharaghans (similar ones are used in Ferahans). Ford (1989:246) also speaks elsewhere of “the dominant dark blue and red; the limited use of other shades, including a little gold” — leaving little room for Baring-Gould’s “mostly yellow,” something that would be aberrant among Middle Eastern rugs of just about any kind (yellows in Old Oriental rugs tend to be fugitive — i.e., to fade relatively quickly — though not to black). In reality, with respect to this color Baring-Gould appears to have merely extrapolated from Wolfe’s known tastes rather than relying on known facts, for I find no reference in the Wolfe books to the color of this rug. And because the Keraghan and the Shirvan (see below) were both gifts, Wolfe would not, in any event, have been the one to select a particular color.

And what about the Shirvan (Shirvân) alternative? The latter is mentioned only in The Final Deduction (FINL). In 1961, Miss Margot Tedder asks Wolfe, “‘Is that a Kazak?’ ‘No,’ he said. Shirvan’. . . It was given to me in nineteen thirty-two, in Cairo, by a man to whom I had rendered a service, and I suspected he had stolen it in Kandahar. . . . Only an ignoramus could mistake it for a Kazak. Kazaks have a long pile” (Stout 1963:Ch. 7, 74); short pile is associated with a finer weave. (Note that the donor of this carpet is not specified as Armenian).

How might we explain this seeming conflict between the “Keraghan” and the “Shirvan” identifications? Of course, Wolfe might have replaced the former carpet between the time of the action of FINL (1961) and that of PASS (1969). However, Wolfe’s notorious inertia and devotion to routine — as well as the long-wearing quality of antique Oriental rugs — suggest that it is unlikely that he would have chosen to exchange one carpet definitively for another. As Kenneth Van Dover (2003:3) put it in At Wolfe’s Door, “inside the house, the furnishings are permanent.”

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Dead Poet On MacDougal Street
By Kevin Lambert

New York City 1959

It was the kind of bright, crisp winter’s afternoon that beckoned you outside, at least for short periods. I had been glad to walk from the Village to the old Brownstone on 35th Street, at which point I was just as glad to be inside.

Nero Wolfe, 300 plus pounds, as well padded as a small dinosaur, was sipping beer and speaking.

“I’m not sure I would call it poetry, even though poetry is meant to be read aloud with musical accompaniment. Beowulf was presented in song. But that poem told a story, which I fail to recognize in a bongo drum accompanying lines like ‘Oh America, when will we be worthy of your million Trotskyites?’”

Wolfe rang for another beer. I leaned back. Archie Goodwin, a natty, muscular guy with an aggressive chin, was seated at another desk on the side of the room. It was Goodwin who had made the appointment with his famous boss. But Wolfe was meeting with me as a personal favor to Gregory French, a novelist who lived across the street from me. He wrote complicated fiction that few people even checked out of the libraries, let alone paid good money for.

“Mr. French is a writer I hold in great esteem,” Wolfe had said. “He asked me if I would look into your problem, and I could not refuse. He has dined at my table. Two of his books have a place on my shelves. He told me that, on the basis of one of your plays, he has discerned what he called a ‘kernel of true insight buried under a mound of drivel.’

“I guess I’ll take that as a compliment,” I said, lightly.

“Do so,” he said. “Esteem is hard to come by in the world of letters. Don’t disparage it.”

Goodwin cleared his throat. “Mr. Winthrop has had four of his plays produced, but they didn’t make a lot of money. None, in fact. But he
recently made the acquaintance of a theatrical angel, who advanced him $10,000" — Goodwin looked at me — "that was the amount, sir?"

I nodded. I didn’t blame him for being skeptical. I was having trouble believing it myself. Ten thousand is what a successful square pulls down in a year.

“To write three plays,” Goodwin continued.

“This has caused a lot of jealousy on the part of my roommate,” I said. “His name is Harold. Harold Harold, actually. He thought having the same first and last names would make him memorable, something like William Carlos Williams. But he is, like, bothering me, to the extent that I can’t concentrate on the plays I have been commissioned to write. He is actually deliberately sabotaging me. And my work. He is always badgering me, yelling when I’m trying to think, banging on pots and pans and playing stuff like Lawrence Welk records.”

“Why suffer it?” Wolfe asked. “Surely $10,000 is sufficient capital for you to set up elsewhere.”

“You can get a furnished room in the Village for $15 a week,” Goodwin said. His tone, along with his Harris Tweed suit, told me what he thought of the idea.

“I can’t move because Harold won’t be able to pay the rent on his own. He’s a poet, and unpublished poet, with all the income that that implies. I owe him a lot. In fact I owe him my present life. Which I guess would include the 10 grand. We went to high school together, and he set an example for me. I don’t expect guys like you to be sympathetic, but he showed me that the American Dream comes with an underground, and it can be productive. And it can be a lot of fun. Then, when he came here, in 1951, he wrote me, and convinced me to move to Greenwich Village. I was working in a Ford plant in Detroit. I took his advice and came here and found it was the only place on earth I could live. He was the cat who introduced me to the music of Dizzy Gillespie.”

Wolfe shuddered, quite a sight with so much to shudder with.

“It could really hurt him, Mr. Wolfe, it might even kill him. And I would have that on my conscience for the rest of my life. What I am asking you to do is to speak to him rationally. Explain the situation. A third party — especially a third party with your intellect and reputation — is always more credible.

“I’m willing to pay $500,” I said. “For a 30-minute talk with another highly intelligent human being.”

in G. Griffin Lewis’s 1920 The Practical Book of Oriental Rugs (neither “Keraghan” nor “Kharâghân” appears in Stone’s 1996 The Oriental Rug Lexicon, either); 2) the initial letter “F” used in MIGH is a misprint for the “K” of “Keraghan,” both because subsequent mentions in the Corpus call the carpet a “Keraghan” and because Goodwin acknowledges the “F” as a typo in his (non-canonical) The Brownstone of Nero Wolfe (Darby 1983:105). The fact that Archie gives the same 14' x 26' dimensions in 1969, toward the end of the Wolfe Corpus — in PASS (Stout 1973:Ch. 5, 32) — as he did in MIGH might seem to favor the idea of there having been only one kind of carpet.

It is in 1969, in PASS, that Goodwin first comes to call the office carpet a “Keraghan” (Stout 1974:Ch. 5, 32, Ch. 14, 119). The “Keraghan,” with the same 14' x 26' dimensions specified, is mentioned once more, for 1966, in Death of a Doxy (Stout 1967:Ch. 9, 60). Again in 1974, in A Family Affair, the final novel, Assistant District Attorney Daniel F. Coggins observes, speaking of the Keraghan, “That’s a beautiful rug.” Wolfe, realizing that he is being buttered up, replies, facetiously, “A gift from the Shah of Iran” (Stout 1976:49).

What, we may ask, then, is a “Keraghan”? The name does not appear in most Oriental rug books. The Oriental Rug Lexicon does tell us this: “Kharaghan, Kharâqân. A group of villages in Hamadan province of Iran, northwest of Sâveh. These villages produce single-wefted rugs with Kurdish designs,” featuring central medallions (Stone 1997:124; Kurds, who speak an Indo-Iranian tongue, are the majority population in the Hamadan region and are the main rug-weavers; note that in Persian, some /a's/ and /e's/ are close to one another in pronunciation and may be interchangeable according to dialect). P. R. J. Ford (1989:236-37) elaborated:

In the north[east]ern part of the Hamadan region, on the edge of the [Turkic] Shah Sevan tribal area, lies the Keraghan group of [Persian] villages which produces rugs and runners of all sizes in designs which often look Kurdish-influenced. . . . Dark-blue grounds predomi- nate, but red is also found; birds and animals often fea- ture as subsidiary motifs.

According to Ford’s The Oriental Carpet (1989:92; also, Black 1985:136), the Ferahan, from a village of that name also in western Per- sia’s Hamadan region, “is one of the best known [and sought-after] of all nineteenth-century [commercial] carpet designs. . . . in its heyday it had a great reputation for quality combined with elegance and restraint. . . . [it is characterized by] tasteful restraint and economy of design, dura- ble construction with very good wool”—all of which would have appealed to Wolfe. The fields of Ferahans were in madder red or, less
merchant who had got himself in a bad hole (Wolfe suspected that he had stolen the rug in Kandahar). It is either a Keraghan or a Shirvan—[narrator] Archie does not seem to be quite sure which, although he claims to have learned about rugs from Wolfe.

Regrettably, this paragraph conflates and confuses certain matters. Let us, then, look more closely into what Wolfe’s detective assistant Archie Goodwin’s reports actually tell us and what kinds of rugs are being talked about. We will begin by combing the Corpus itself.

It is notable that no Oriental rug is mentioned for the Brownstone before the mid-1950s, a period during which many members of the American public had come to view Orientals as passé, and during which myriad previously fashionable hand-woven gems were very widely replaced with wall-to-wall commercial carpeting. Wolfe’s office carpet is first mentioned in the 1954 case “Die Like a Dog” (Stout 1957:Ch. 2, 142); Mr. Goodwin calls it “the best rug in the house,” thereby indicating that there are others in the domicile. This office one “was given to Wolfe years ago by an Armenian merchant who had got himself in a bad hole.” Armenians have long been prominent in the Oriental-rug trade.

According to the admirable O. E. McBride (2003:73) — echoing Baring-Gould, to some extent — “Wolfe’s original rug is a Kerman in yellow (naturally) and red (fortunately, since it has a murderer’s blood spilled on it in 1935).” But although Kermans come into the picture elsewhere, I have not found the carpet in Wolfe’s office being termed one, nor the color yellow mentioned (Wolfe dislikes red [Gotwald 1993:129], but that hue is difficult to avoid in Oriental rugs). The first time that the office carpet is assigned a geographic name—of origin in print, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is in connection with a 1956 case, Might as Well Be Dead (MIGH; Stout 1958:Ch. 1, 7), in which it is called a Feraghan and is said to have measured 14’ by 26’, and to have “covered all the central expanse.” This would leave some of the floor of the “nearly square” room bare unless the Persian was laid atop wall-to-wall floor-covering — a highly likely circumstance here.

In the rug literature, the designation “Feraghan” refers to rugs from a plain of that name to the north of Arâk (Sultanabad), in western Iran; it is also spelled Farâhân and, today, Ferahan (Stone 1997:77). In light of the fact that in later Wolfe books, the name given is Keraghan, we are faced with a problem. Two possibilities have been offered: 1) the Persian carpet type known as Feraghan or Ferahan is truly meant (Persian /gh/ is pronounced between hard /g/ and /h/, like a Greek gamma—thus, the spelling variants) and subsequent “Kerahans” are misprints, as concluded Frederick G. Gotwald (1993:175) in The Nero Wolfe Handbook, on the basis of finding “Feraghan” but not “Keraghan” on the map

Wolfe grunted and gave Goodwin a look. Then he turned to me.

“Nietzsche said that posthumous men are not as well understood as timely men, but they are listened to better,” Wolfe said. “That role seems eminently suited to poets. They are not known for longevity — perhaps you could exercise some patience, and wait for his posthumous fame.”

I goggled. This was Wolfe’s legendary disinclination to do any work. I thought for a second. “Well, what about T.S. Eliot? He’s been around forever. He’s heard pretty well. What about Yeats? What about Wordsworth? Weren’t they honored in their lifetimes? Wordsworth lived to about 80, didn’t he? And there’s Greg French himself. He’s pushing 70.”

The mention of French’s name reminded Wolfe why he was suffering my presence in the first place. He sighed, taking in enough air to float a weather balloon. Then he closed his eyes. If Goodwin’s books were any indication, he was calculating how many orchids he needed, how much he had to pay Goodwin, Fritz, the chef, and Theodore, the orchid nurse.

He sighed again.

“Archie,” he said. “Your notebook.”

CHAPTER 2

Goodwin wanted to walk back to the Village, and I obliged him, although I insisted that we stop about halfway for a hot drink. He had a glass of milk.

I didn’t know what to make of him. His stories about Wolfe, published in book form and serialized in Manhattan Gumshoe, were lively and well-written, but he struck me as the kind of guy who didn’t read anything more than Esquire once a month. He asked me if I was a beatnik.

“I never use that term,” I replied. “And I don’t know anyone who does. Except reporters.”

“So how do you classify yourself?” he asked.

“Just a writer with a goatee who lives in the Village. And digs chicks.”

We reached the Village and walked to MacDougal Street, where Harold and I shared the flat. As we walked in, and flicked on the light, Goodwin grabbed my arm.

“Don’t move,” he whispered. “Something’s wrong.”
“Huh?”

“Shut up,” he hissed, and he meant it.

Taking his handkerchief, he started moving slowly through the room. As far as I could see, nothing was wrong.

Then I saw Harold.

He was sitting in his chair, as always, with a copy of Shakespeare’s sonnets on his lap, the same way I had seen him a thousand times. He wasn’t reading, however, nor would he ever read anything again. Blood had dripped down to the pages, landing on the phrase “Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.”

Living in the Village for some years, I had seen a lot of odd things, but they were more like Neal Cassady hanging naked from a chandelier singing “Mairzy Doats.” This one struck me speechless.

Not Goodwin. He turned on me, angrily. “Is this your idea of being cute?” he snapped. “Did you shoot him and try to drag us in as some kind of an alibi?”

I found my voice. “Mr. Goodwin, I didn’t shoot Harold. He was my best friend. Like, we were buddies.”

Goodwin stepped over and abruptly started frisking me. As someone who gets roused by the cops once a month, I know a frisk, and he did a clean quick job of it. Then he went into the bedrooms, and looked them over. Nobody was hiding anywhere.

“I’m not carrying a gun,” he said. “I didn’t think I’d need one for a talk with an unpublished poet.”

Right, I thought. It’s the published ones you have to watch out for. But I merely nodded.

“This is getting complicated,” he said. He moved to the phone, hesitated, and walked to the door.

“Come on,” he said. “We’re calling Mr. Wolfe, and you’re staying where I can see you.”

We went.
CHAPTER 3

There was a phone booth in Reggio’s, and Goodwin kept me right in front of him, leaving the door open as he dialed.

He got an answer and spoke.

“Me. Complications. The poet in question will now have a chance at posthumous fame.”

I couldn’t hear Wolfe’s reply, but it gave every indication of being a loud one.

“Yes, sir. No, I have no idea about that. That’s your department. I fetch, carry, escort, and report. And now I need instructions.”

There was quite a pause while Wolfe either sat there thinking things over or told Goodwin what to do.

He hung up, inserted another nickel, and dialed another number. Also from memory.

“Hello? I want to report a murder.”

Sergeant Purley Stebbins was bigger than Goodwin, running a bit to fat, with a harsh, intimidating cop’s voice and unfriendly eyes. I had the feeling that if I told him a joke he would clap me in protective custody.

He was listening to Goodwin’s report, and he didn’t seem to be buying it. But he would probably have the same reaction to the news that Calvin Coolidge wasn’t president anymore.

“Then I called you,” Goodwin was saying, finishing up what I thought was a well-edited, straightforward recitation.

Stebbins grunted and turned to me.

“So, Mr. Winthrop. You’ll notice that Goodwin here didn’t say that you shot the deceased yourself and then tried to rope him and Wolfe in as an alibi.”

I didn’t reply. I had, as I’ve said, pretty much monthly interruptions by the cops since I moved into the Village and grew my goatee.

“Let’s go downtown, Winthrop, and take a paraffin test.”
“Be glad to,” I replied. It would show if I had fired a gun recently, if they read the results correctly and honestly, which I seriously doubted. But I wasn’t going to say no.

“I’ll come along,” said Goodwin, suddenly cheerful. “If Mr. Winthrop, who is still a client, would happen to fall down a flight of stairs, I can be there to catch him.”

Stebbins gave Goodwin a black look. “You’re clowning for what this guy can pay you?” he snarled.

“Sometimes I do my job just for art’s sake,” he replied, and my opinion of him shot up.

CHAPTER 4

Sixteen hours later, we were finishing a meal at Wolfe’s Brownstone. It was confit de canard, with sauce rouenaise, which I thought was okay until Wolfe told me it was made with goose blood. It was quite unlike my usual diet of hot dogs, beer and Chinese carryout. Wolfe, who won’t discuss business at meals, had led us through a discussion of Schopenhauer’s influence on 20th century Western literature. My position was that anyone that pessimistic probably had a greater influence on the murder rate.

We had just moved to the office when the doorbell rang. Goodwin, clearly having heard enough about German philosophers for the day, went to answer.

“It’s the man about the chair,” he said upon returning.

Wolfe made an exasperated sigh.

“Confound it.” He looked at me.

“Mr. Winthrop, Inspector Cramer of Homicide South is at the door. I can admit him, but I can give you the opportunity to leave by the back door.”

“I just spend half a day with the cops. I think they’re done with me. I’ll stay.”

Wolfe shrugged. “As you wish.” He nodded to Goodwin.

Inspector Cramer was even bigger than Stebbins, and every bit as humorless, with cold gray eyes. He sat down in the red leather chair, looking at me, Goodwin, and Wolfe.

literature, not politics, but long-ago affiliations of their supporters were suddenly viewed askance by a government increasingly suspicious of radical ideologies. A contact of Lon Cohen reported rumors (confirmed by one of Dol Bonner’s operatives on an unrelated job in the garment district) of HUAC casting its eye on bohemian communities. The night that Saul spotted what was certainly a federal agent following Angelina home, he and his beloved had a long talk. Rather than allow her insecure status to interfere with the anonymity required for his livelihood, she announced that she would live abroad until the atmosphere of persecution passed. Within a week, she was gone.

Saul’s loyal companions never questioned his now-celibate status. Nobody asked the circumstances of Angelina’s disappearance or the date of her return. Never did they inquire whether he’d had word from her, nor did they speculate on his reasons for buying a house in Brooklyn when its elderly owners died. And from that day forth, in Archie’s memoirs, Saul was granted bachelor status with no footnotes or explanations.

But could Saul and his expatriate Angelina have created a code to facilitate secret communication? Do they sometimes rendezvous in some remote country retreat far from the gaze of their persecutors? Does Saul’s status as a frequent customer of the airlines allow him to secure quick flights when Wolfe sends him to — let’s say — Peru? Do the shelves flanking Saul’s library and piano sometimes sport a new curio posted from some exotic place? And is his accumulation of residential properties a way of ascertaining that he and his gypsy lover, wherever she may be, will have a home waiting for them on that day when their country is once more safe for lovers?
upcoming performance, and that despite frequent mention of a mentor named Stanislavski, Communist Russian influences played no significant part in their manifesto.

At the play's opening, Saul paid the requested donation and sat serenely through nearly three hours of filmy-draped figures wafting among the canvas screens, declaiming in voices bearing no resemblance to a sonata. What he was watching, however, was Angelina, stationed at the side of the makeshift stage with a clipboard and whispering from time to time to a boy standing next to her, who would then adjust the lights (not a complicated task, there being only three settings — blackout, shadowy, and blinding). Afterward, Saul caught up with the company at their café, where he praised their endeavor without venturing to guess at its intent, and treated them to a bottle of champagne from the proprietor's modest cellar.

Having thus introduced himself, Saul proceeded to drop in on rehearsals occasionally, bringing sacks of coffee and bagels from the deli. Upon learning that Angelina lived with her grandparents in the far reaches of Brooklyn, a long subway ride away from her theatrical pursuits, he gave her a key to his apartment on 38th Street and told her to use it as she pleased, with no questions or restrictions. Saul's family, seeing how happy this goyish girl made him, shrugged off his infatuation as a young man's coming-of-age rite.

They were wrong. Eventually, Saul asked Angelina to marry him, but she refused, saying that since no one knew where fortune might someday take them, she loved him too much to bind their destinies to one another. There came a day, nevertheless, when these two presented Saul's landlord with some kind of paper assuring them legal cohabitation. (Three years later, Saul would himself become landlord of the property, hiring a manager so that the other tenants need never know.)

This is how it came about that when Archie first made Saul's acquaintance, the latter's domestic arrangements included a "lady of the house" who answered the telephone at one of Saul's many numbers, and whom the arriving poker-night fraternity often saw leaving for a rehearsal, artists' fundraiser, or some kind of cultural event. Having been raised by his Midwestern aunt not to pry into other people's business unnecessarily, Archie assumed her to be a lawfully wedded Mrs. Panzer. (There was one occasion when Orrie — out of habit, mostly — made a casually flirtatious remark to "the missus." She smiled as she rebuffed his advance, but Archie, Fred, and Lon issued a stern warning to their comrade never to do it again.)

It was too good to last, however. The climate in America was changing. The opinions of Angelina and her colleagues may have been shaped by

"Will you have some beer, Mr. Cramer?" Wolfe asked.

"Why is this beatnik still your client?" he asked, ignoring the offer. "Don't you favor Park Avenue dowagers and rich slobs?"

"Mr. Cramer. Mr. Winthrop, who is in a position to know, informed me that the term 'beatnik' was coined by a San Francisco gossip columnist named Herb Caen. This puts it alongside any other word invented by a tabloid writer. For instance, Presleymania."

"You haven't answered my question," Cramer said.

"My answer would be that I am under no obligation to inform you of my motives for maintaining clients or anything else."

Cramer pulled out a cigar, unwrapped it, set it between his teeth, and threw the wrapper at Wolfe's wastebasket. He missed.

"Here's how I see this Harold case," he said. "Winthrop here knew about paraffin tests so of course he didn't fire the gun. Or at least not without rubber gloves on. A pair of which," he said, looking straight at me, "Lt. Rowcliffe just found at the crime scene."

"Indeed. Were they tested for gunpowder residue?"

"They're being tested now."

"Were they in some way linked to my client?"

Cramer grunted. "Not yet. And let me finish. Prints were wiped off, everywhere, in that place. It got a real thorough rub and we didn't find any but Harold's. It's probably the cleanest beatnik hovel in New York."

"Why would Mr. Winthrop wipe off his own fingerprints? He lived there."

"I think maybe he was hopped-up on something. He just started wiping prints and couldn't stop."

Cramer bit deeper into his cigar.

"Now," he said, "I think there was some professional jealousy here, just like Winthrop said. And I think it just got out of hand. And I think Winthrop pulled his gun and shot Harold. Then I think he came over here with this story, so Goodwin would find the body."
“Which presupposes that Mr. Winthrop thought himself clever enough to gull both Mr. Goodwin and myself,” Wolfe replied. “Very risky. He could have used the same story and enlisted the aid of a coffeehouse waitress.”

Wolfe sipped some coffee.

“May I ask, have you found the murder weapon?”

“We have not, and that fact alone is keeping Mr. Winthrop from another trip downtown. And a longer stay.” Cramer looked at me.

“Don’t leave town. Don’t let Wolfe talk you into any of his schemes. And, finally, get yourself a lawyer.” He turned to Wolfe.

“And if you want my opinion,” he said, “getting yourself involved with these beatniks is a lot different than uptown murders. They’re all hopped-up and the only work they ever do is to pound on bongos. Or they sit around and read weird books and drink beer.” Cramer stood up.

“I can see how you’d get along with them,” he snarled.

He walked out. Goodwin followed him to the door, where, I was told, he retrieved his own hat and coat.

Later, in Wolfe’s office, I was explaining my movements of the day before the murder.

“There was a gathering at our place,” I told him. “Just a few people. Actually, everyone who knew Harold was there.”

“Indeed,” said Wolfe. “Who attended?”

“My theatrical angel, Mr. Frederson. And Harold’s three friends.”

“I would like to see them. Can you, assisted by Mr. Goodwin, have them all here at 9:00 p.m.?”

“What?”

“Mr. Wolfe needs to speak to them,” Goodwin said, “and the sooner the better.” He gestured to his desk. “And the phone is there.”

“Well, I don’t know.”

“Please try,” Wolfe said, and opened his book, which was *Only in America*, by Harry Golden.

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**2011 Gazette Writing Contest Winner**

**The Hunt for The Missing Mrs. Panzer**

by Mary Shen Barnidge

In any but an all-male household, the question would have been addressed immediately and investigated until a solution was found, instead of remaining a mystery for more than a half-century. What happened to the woman identified as Saul’s wife in 1948 (“staked to the ground and happy” was Archie’s appraisal, or words to that effect), but who disappeared without trace or memory soon after, leaving Saul to be described — not as a widower or divorcé, but as a “bachelor” for the rest of the Corpus? How can a man be both a husband and a bachelor?

Easy — if he was never married to begin with.

The story begins long before Archie joined the band of regulars employed by Nero Wolfe, with a job that Saul accepted for a wealthy businessman concerned over his son, enrolled at Columbia University, but embroiled in some after-dark activities in Greenwich Village. Tracking the youth to lower Manhattan was no problem for Saul, nor was it difficult to locate the third-story loft where the object of his surveillance had taken refuge. But when Saul knocked at the door, it opened to confront him with the biggest, brightest, most beautiful brown eyes he had ever seen, peering at him from underneath — no, make that through — a roguish cloud of black curls.

Saul remembered his errand just long enough to look past this apparition into the room and catch sight of his quarry kneeling on a bare floor, with a hammer in one hand, absorbed in nailing a piece of canvas to a wooden frame. Saul mumbled something about having the wrong address and retreated, only then seeing the poster next to the entrance, emblazoned with *The Ghost Sonata* etched in jagged white-on-black letters, below which was pasted a date some two weeks hence.

Just to confirm his initial impression, he followed six of the Ghost chamber’s inhabitants later that night to a small café where they shared a single pot of tea and an equally miserly plate of pastries, morsel by morsel. It wasn’t easy, even for Saul, to concentrate on work in the presence of the alluring young woman whom the others called Angelina, but by the time they departed, he had concluded that they were some kind of dramatic society, that his client’s son’s attentions were focused on its
Fritz and Goodwin had arranged a fine reception. Every kind of drink one could imagine was either on a tray or on call. Precisely at 9:00 p.m. the guests, if that’s the word I want, began to arrive. If Wolfe thought that that was pretty punctual for a bunch of hopped-up bongo players, he didn’t mention it.

Fred Frederson, my theatrical angel. He was sitting in the red leather chair. He was heir to the truly fabulous Motor City Truck Trailer fortune, estimated to be somewhere between $40 and $50 million. He was known as a serious theatrical investor, in that he subsidized writers, not showgirls. He was in his mid-40s, a bachelor, with an apartment on Park Avenue and a mansion on Long Island. He was wearing a rumpled, off-the-rack suit, on the theory that someone that rich could wear anything he wanted.

Linda Montieth. She was a photographer, responsible for filling the pages of a lot of theatrical playbills and publications. She had been one of Harold’s best friends, although there had never been any talk of romance. She was in her mid-20s and overweight, but nowhere near Wolfe’s league. Her extra pounds made her round and attractive. She was, in fact, currently divorcing her third husband.

Elizabeth Van Sween, an acquaintance of mine and sort of a friend of Harold’s. A very slender brunette, dressed entirely in shapeless black denim, she might have been attractive if she stopped biting her fingernails and took off her oversized glasses, which she didn’t need. She was eccentric even by Village standards. She considered herself a poet, but was so contemptuous of the decadent capitalist publishing complex that she expressed her disgust by not writing any. Known as “Thin Lizzie.”

Josh Holstein. He was a folk singer, often seen in Washington Square, singing and strumming his guitar. He made his living by making tours of the coffee houses, approaching anyone who looked like they had money, and offering to “sell” them an original song, for “whatever you think it’s worth.” Then he would sing it. Tall, gangly, looking a bit like a whooping crane, he had a high, reedy voice that got on your nerves and stayed there. Few people have thought his songs were worth a whole lot.

“Mr. Frederson,” said Wolfe, “we will start with you. How well did you know Mr. Harold?”

“I didn’t really know him at all,” Frederson replied. He had a soft manner of speaking. “That gathering was our first meeting.” He cleared his throat. “He wanted to interest me in an epic poem he had written. As you can imagine, this sort of thing happens a lot. I told him that I only
finance playwrights. And their occasional play that I feel has literary merit.”

“The most recent being, ‘Thurl! Thurl! Why is the Narrator girl??’ with a cast of 13 midgets?” Wolfe asked.

He nodded. Not with real pride, I thought, but he nodded.

“May I ask your criteria?” Wolfe said.

“Whatever triggers some sort of insight,” Frederson replied. Mr. Winthrop’s last play, ‘Requiem for a Hep-Cat,’ did just that.”

“Indeed.” Wolfe said. He looked at me. “Congratulations,” he muttered. Turning back to Frederson, he said, “Was Mr. Harold overbearing in his presentation or did he accept your rejections equably?”

“He actually went from tenacious to irritating. He kept coming back to his epic poem, casting it in a slightly different light. I told him, again and again, that I was uninterested in the genre itself.” He paused. “I don’t like to speak ill of the dead.”

“People do that all the time,” Wolfe said. “Few among us have a good word for Hitler or Stalin.”

“I would hardly compare Harold to those two,” said Linda. Wolfe turned his head to face hers.

“May I ask your relationship with Mr. Harold, Madam?”

“He was a dear friend,” she replied. “I sometimes brought him along on photo-shoots as an assistant. He wasn’t skilled; I just needed an extra pair of hands sometimes. But he needed the work. It helped him pay his rent.” She shot me a meaningful look. “Which is far more than Mr. Winthrop ever did.”

“I don’t think I could have used an assistant playwright,” I said. “And I don’t use a light meter.”

“Perhaps if you used something to keep you on point your cast might not have outnumbered your audience!” she snapped. I turned to Wolfe.

“If you’re wondering how she’s managed to go through three husbands at the age of 26, this might explain — ”

Notes for “The Third Brother”

i For those who insist that Wolfe, Archie, Sherlock Holmes, Lord Peter Wimsey, et al. are mere fictional characters, this essay is probably not for you.

ii Dorothy L. Sayers, Unnatural Death, p. 7 (1955 Harper & Row edition). The anachronism of including Delagardie’s “biographical note” here, when it was clearly written after the events of Strong Poison, can only add to the suspicion.

iii As he in fact did, shot down in World War II during the Battle of Britain.

iv Ibid. “Denver was always tiresome, although the big scandal did not break out until the Jubilee year.”

v Ibid., p. 8.


vii Never stated outright, which is in itself significant.

viii Cf., e.g., Baring-Gould, William S., Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-Fifth Street, p. 96. Baring-Gould prefers 1912, but this is not consistent with the start of X’s relationship with his employer, which cannot have occurred later than 1927. X was already a college dropout by this time.


x In Marvin Kaye, ed., The Archie Goodwin Files, p. 100, Joel Levy gives Archie’s birth year as 1909. I choose to credit Archie’s own words. But in any event, the identification works for either 1908 or 1909. Kaye’s work also includes “Firecrackers” (see fn. 9), which is highly recommended.

xi Sayers, op.cit.


xiii Sayers, op.cit., p. 9.

xiv Goodwin, op.cit.


it was Lord Peter who recruited Hitchcock to keep an eye on the young Archie, via his contacts in the United States — first among them his old friend and fighting companion, Nero Wolfe.

For the skeptical: as we know, Nero Wolfe is an intensely private person. Discounting longtime associates, Wolfe calls only five men (four since the death of Marko Vukčić) in the New York metropolis by their Christian names. He is also a profound skeptic, a very private person of mature judgment who gives his trust only to the few who earn it. Yet we are asked to believe not only that Wolfe almost casually hired this callow, cocky college dropout without references at the age of eighteen, but that he immediately began to call his new and untried assistant “Archie.” The mind boggles. But now that we know Archie was Geoffrey Hitchcock’s protégé, Wolfe’s uncharacteristic behavior is explained.

And finally: Archie calls the investigation of Bess Huddleston’s murder “Cordially Invited to Meet Death.” This seems a very odd title, unless Archie is slyly giving us a different message. Wimsey often used his two middle names when traveling incognito on Government business. In August 1941, as America’s entry into the war neared, did the Foreign Office entrust Peter Wimsey with a delicate mission to the United States? Can it be that Huddleston, New York’s “hostess with the most-est,” cordially invited Archie and Wolfe to meet — Death Bredon?

“If you please,” Wolfe said, holding up a palm. “Miss Montieth, during the course of your friendship with Mr. Harold, did he ever reciprocate your good deeds and find the occasional assignment for you?”

“No. He was not well connected in that way. Or in any way, actually.” She looked at Wolfe, trying to make him understand. “He was a poet, Mr. Wolfe. Not a sycophant. Or a courtier,” she said, looking at me, stressing the word.

“Did anyone, to your knowledge, dislike him enough to kill him?”

“No,” she said. “Not at all.”

Wolfe turned to Thin Lizzie. “Miss Van Sween. Why were you invited to this gathering?”

She didn’t answer. She stared at Wolfe, which she had been doing since she sat down.

“Miss Van Sween?”

“You’re far out,” she said.

“I beg your pardon?”

“You’ve got flowers all over the place and you wear yellow shirts and socks and you’re so fat you could create a whole new species of human being. Circular humans. Far out. I’ve been writing a poem about you, while I’ve been sitting here. But I’m not going to recite it. I’m not even going to write it down. But it lives. It lives forever in the air we breathe. Shiva hears it.”

There was a substantial pause, which Wolfe finally broke.

“Thank you for not reciting it.”

“Once a poem is recited,” she said, “just anybody could hear it. Misinterpret it. Twist it to their own purposes. Look what happened to Nietzsche.”

“Thank you for that. If I may, could I ask you where you were yesterday at 4 p.m.?”

“I was sitting in a coffeehouse. I was thinking.”

“Of course. Did anybody see you?”

“See me think? I doubt it. Who can see the mental processes?”

The Duchess was always of the greatest assistance to his [Sir Peter Wimsey] hobby of criminal investigation, though she never alluded to it, and maintained a polite fiction of it’s non-existence.

— Paul Austin Delagardie, “Biographical Note, Peter Death Bredon Wimsey, D.S.O.”
“How about your physical being?”

“Oh sure. Everybody saw me. Everybody’s always staring at me. They’re jealous of me.”

“Indeed. Was Mr. Harold jealous of you?”

“Of course he was. My poems didn’t get rejected by every cheap press in New York.”

“They would be if you wrote them down and sent them in,” said Linda, wearily. “And if your rich father didn’t send you a check every month, you’d be waiting tables like everybody else!”

“I don’t write things down. How could I possibly take lunch orders?”

Wolfe, according to Goodwin’s books, had an extremely low tolerance even for normal women, but here he was being as patient as a social worker. I made a mental note to buy Greg French a bottle of champagne.

“What were your feelings toward Mr. Harold?”

“He was all right,” she replied. “But I didn’t really like him. But then, I don’t really like anybody.”

“Why, then, did you attend? Why were you even invited?”

“Obviously, since they were there to suck after mammon, Ralph and Harold were trying to inject some class into the gathering.”

“My God!” Linda yelled. “You’ve got about as much class as a nose-bleed!”

Wolfe sighed. “I would like to pose a general question. Does any one of you own a gun?”

“I do,” said Josh, the folk singer. He did, too. He may have been an easygoing folk singer, but he was also a World War II veteran, and had in fact been in on the D-Day landings.

Wolfe nodded. “What sort?”

“A Luger. A souvenir. They were the top keepsakes. I took it off a dead Kraut. He was playing possum, lying in a bunch of bodies after an artillery attack. It’s an old Kraut trick. We were supposed to shoot them anyway, when we saw ‘em like that, so I had him covered. Then I saw him names), but given X’s other evasions and manipulations in this area, we have no reason to believe either. Significantly, though, on one point X is consistent: his father is dead. Indeed, as we now know, the father died when X was a toddler.

X lives and works in New York and is closely connected with the publishing industry. Besides having a well known “in” at a major New York paper, several of his cases have involved him with book publishers, one of which may well have been Harper & Row (see footnotes) with its name disguised.

X followed his half-brother Peter into the fascinating world of detection. Unlike Peter, but like his father and his half-brother Gerald, he is a man of action — perhaps the quintessential man of action. His sense of duty, to his employer and to his country during World War II, is without flaw. His eye for the ladies is legendary, although — at least as far as we know from his writings — he treats the fair sex as a gentleman should. In this he closely resembles his brother Peter, as documented by his Uncle Paul\(x\) and, in fact, throughout the Wimsey Canon.

I give you the Third Man, half-brother to Gerald, Duke of Denver, and Lord Peter Wimsey: Mr. Archie Goodwin of West Thirty-Fifth Street.

The reader may well ask: is this really possible? What can the connection be? How did the Wimsey family keep an eye on Archie Goodwin — as they surely would have, given the fundamental decency of all the Wimseys and Delagardies? Who was the intermediary?

Readers of the Corpus can perhaps guess the last answer at once. When Wolfe needs assistance in Great Britain, he calls upon a trusted and reliable British counterpart, Major E. G. Hitchcock, M.C., O.B.E. (retired). In recent years something of the history of the Wolfe-Hitchcock relationship has been revealed.\(x\) We find that Wolfe and Hitchcock go back to 1917, to World War I in the Balkans. They were not merely long-distance professional colleagues; they were comrades, their friendship tempered in war. When the young Archie Goodwin arrived in New York, surely it was Major Hitchcock who saw to it that Archie landed on his feet in the big city.

But what connection could there possibly be with the Wimsey family? In the same memoir, Major Hitchcock reveals — almost in passing — two vital facts: he was born in 1891 (one year after Lord Peter), and he was graduated from Oxford’s Balliol College. Thus, he and Peter were “up” at Balliol at about the same time, with at least a two-year overlap — possibly all three years, as Peter did not “go up” until he was nineteen.\(x\) Balliol is not a large place; it is inconceivable that Geoffrey Hitchcock and Peter Wimsey were not acquainted. Here is the missing connection:
Mortimer Gerald Bredon Wimsey, fifteenth Duke of Denver. This parentage is wholly consistent with that Duke’s known predilections.iv

Let us return now to Uncle Paul. In the same “biographical note,” Paul states that the Duke was “willing enough to turn his other son over to me. Indeed, at the age of seventeen, Peter came to me of his own accord.”v (Emphasis supplied.) That is, Lord Peter, born in 1890, had only one brother as late as 1907. We know also that the fifteenth Duke died in a hunting accident in 1911.vi

What do we now know about this Third Brother?

- He was born illegitimately between 1907 and 1912 inclusive.
- The circumstances of his birth — indeed, his very existence — were hushed up and have continued so over the years. It is significant that a New York publisher chose physically to eradicate the written evidence of his Uncle Paul, as late as 1955.
- He was the son of a man of action, not of cerebration.
- He was the son of a man with a definite eye for the female sex, a trait shared by both his half-brothers as well.
- His half-brothers, each in his own way, also exhibited an extraordinary sense of duty: Gerald’s to the Denver estate, Peter’s to King and country.
- And he was half-brother to, arguably, the greatest amateur detective Britain has ever known.

To the student of the detective art, a name must leap to the mind. Call him “X” (a deliberate obfuscation which this person and his employer often used themselves in their many adventures).

All sources agree that X was born on October 23, but his year of birth is quite mysterious. In chronicles written by him during his working years, X impliesvii birth years ranging from 1908 to 1912.viii But in a late work, X himself clearly states that he was eighteen in December 1926.ix We may take it that X was born on October 23, 1908.x

X also deliberately obscures his parentage and place of birth. He does consistently refer to having been born in Ohio, but is most evasive about the place (Zanesville? Chillicothe? “a farm”? He cites them all.) He refers to his mother sometimes as living, sometimes as deceased. His relationship with her is described now as close and affectionate, now as distant, now as hostile and the proximate cause of his leaving home. Most significantly, her identity is closely guarded at all times.

X’s treatment of his mother is garrulous compared to that of his father, who is hardly mentioned at all. He is named twice (two different

blink, so I plugged him. He screamed, then he croaked. I went over, and he had this Luger in his hand. He was gonna take me out with it. I had another Luger for a time, but I traded it with my topkick for three cartons of Luckies.”

“Indeed,” Wolfe said. “May I offer my congratulations? And yet, you spend your time singing songs of peace and understanding in Washington Square.”

“So would you, if you’d been through what I been through.”

I stifled a snicker. The image of Nero Wolfe, strumming a guitar and singing “Root Hog and Die” was a bit too much for me.

“Mr. Holstein,” Wolfe asked. “What sort of a friendship did you enjoy with Mr. Harold?”

Holstein shrugged. “I just knew him. Sometimes he’d sit and listen when I was singing in the park.”

“What occasioned you to attend this social event?”

“Ralph here told me about it. Free beer, he said. That’s all I need.”

Wolfe nodded. “Did Mr. Harold speak to you at any length?”

“Yeah. He talked about how unfair the world is, what with Ralph getting 10 grand and him having to go around trying to sell his poems to tourists.”

“Isn’t that the source of your income as well?”

He smiled. “Well, if you’re asking if I thought he was cutting in on my turf and that I shot him to clear the field, I think my best day, in the last six years, brought in eight bucks.”

“The French writers compete so viciously because they are all fighting for a piece of a very small pie,” Wolfe said.

“Robbe-Grillet never took a potshot at Sartre,” he replied. “And he knows how to use a gun.”

Wolfe looked around the room.

“Here is another general question. Who hated Mr. Harold enough to kill him?”
Nobody had any thoughts on that.

“Well,” Wolfe said, “I will see what I can do with these slivers of information. Meanwhile permit me to say that if this sort of gathering is representative of anything to come in American literature or theatre, we might as well move into a cave with a television.

“Good evening.” He turned his back on them and picked up his book.

“Far out,” said Thin Lizzie.

* * * * *

CHAPTER 6

Archie Goodwin closed the door on the departing guests and returned to the office. Winthrop had gone along with his friends. He had a lot of apartment cleaning to do. Nero Wolfe was reading.

“Well,” Goodwin said. “That certainly cleared things up. I never would have suspected that Robbe-Grillet and Sartre were on the outs. Congratulations.”

No reply.

“Yes sir,” he continued. “And I think we should add ‘far out’ to the business cards. Think of all the wealthy hep cats...well, beating a path to our door.”


“Yes sir. If you were to ask me, it’s Frederson. He was worried that Harold Harold would distract Winthrop from attaining his nuances of insight. Me, I hate that. I can see him flying into as homicidal rage.”

The doorbell rang. Archie looked at the clock.

“Send whoever it is away,” Wolfe snapped.

“It’s only ten-thirty. The cats and chicks are probably coming back for an all-night party, with poetry, wine, and Dizzy Gillespie’s new album.”

Goodwin, who had a keen sense of when to stop, did so, and went to answer the door.

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**2011 GAZETTE WRITING CONTEST WINNER**

**The Third Brother**  
An Exercise in the Higher Criticism  
David A. Appling

The Lord Peter Wimsey Canon, so ably recorded by Dorothy L. Sayers, contains an interesting anomaly that should be of considerable interest to Wolfeans everywhere.

Peter Death Bredon Wimsey is the second son of the late fifteenth Duke of Denver. His elder brother Gerald is the sitting Duke. Their only other publicly acknowledged sibling is a younger sister, Lady Mary.

In some of Miss Sayers’s chronicles, there is a prefatory profile of Wimsey by his maternal uncle Paul Delagardie. Here, Uncle Paul refers in passing to Peter Wimsey’s “brothers” — plural. It is of considerable interest that in one of my American editions, the “s” in “brothers” has visibly been cut out of the leading. This suggests a deliberate attempt on someone’s part to mislead the reader and obfuscate the search for truth.

It’s fair to assume that Paul himself was not attempting to mislead. Indeed, this assumption is amply supported by the complete openness regarding matters of sex and progeny displayed not only by Paul but also by his admirable sister the Dowager Duchess Honoria, Peter’s mother. We may take it, then, that the “Third Man” exists.

So Peter had an unacknowledged second brother. On which side of the blanket was this brother born? Regrettably, we must immediately conclude that it was the wrong side. Had it been otherwise, Peter’s elder brother, the sixteenth Duke, would not have been so notoriously obsessed about the lack of a “backup heir” to the dukedom, should his only son, the reckless Viscount St. George, meet an untimely end.

Similarly, it was not Duchess Honoria who was “outside the blanket” during her confinement. Not only would that have been far out of character, but Her Grace would not have been able to resist telling us. Therefore, Peter’s second brother was the bastard son of
It’s that particular talent which moved Wolfe to pay Saul what may have been his highest possible compliment — and I think Wolfe deserves the final word here about Saul Panzer. It comes in the novella “Disguise for Murder.” Saul has spent his afternoon checking members of the Manhattan Flower Club in and out of the Brownstone. He has kept a list of the 219 guests who were admitted — so when one of them is murdered, in Wolfe’s office no less, Inspector Cramer wants to know who was there. Cramer is skeptical of Saul’s ability to identify faces based solely on that list. “Are you telling me,” he says, “that you could fit that many names to that many faces after seeing them just once?”

Saul’s shoulders went slightly up and down. “There’s more to people than faces. I might go wrong on a few, but not many. I was at that door to do a job and I did it.”

“You should know by this time,” Wolfe rumbled, “that Mr. Panzer is an exceptional man.”

To which I would only add...he is indeed.

Upon returning, he spoke. “I was wrong. The cat at the door is definitely not far out. Mr. Cornelius Van Sween. I put him in the front room.”

“No!” Wolfe bellowed.

“He’s the father of Elizabeth Van Sween.”

“Send him my condolences and escort him out.”

“You know, of course, that I checked these people. Van Sween is president of Omega Electronics, which supplies parts to most of the TV and radio manufacturers in America, and what’s left over gets sold to the Air Force. He lives alone on Park Avenue, except when he’s at his summer home on an island in Maine, which he owns. He insists upon speaking with you.”

“Confound it!” Wolfe snarled. After a long pause, he told Goodwin to admit the visitor.

Cornelius Van Sween was tall, and, considering his age and his upper crust diet, still trim. His graying hair was cut in a Princeton and his clothes represented close to a thousand dollars. He didn’t seem to be any more of a hand shaker than Wolfe was, and he sat down in the red leather chair.

“The evening is well advanced,” Wolfe said. “Will you have some refreshment?”

“Vodka on the rocks,” he said, decisively, which is what one would expect from the boss.

Fritz had gone to his room, so Goodwin made one, along with a beer for Wolfe.

“Thank you,” he said, in the tone he patently used for servants everywhere. He inclined his head in Goodwin’s direction.

“Please dismiss your man. I have something of a personal nature to discuss.”

A corner of Wolfe’s mouth went up. “Of course,” he said. “You may go, Goodwin.”

Goodwin, quick on the uptake as ever, merely said, “Very good, sir,” left the room, and proceeded to the listening post behind the wall.

The particular thing is that my daughter isn’t really my daughter — the one that’s blackmailing me, I mean.

Dazy Perrit, “Before I Die”
“Wolfe,” Van Sween began, “I understand that my daughter was here tonight.”

“That’s surprising. How would you know of that?”

“That’s my business. I repeat the question.”

“I withhold the answer. I am under no obligation to report anything whatsoever to you.”

“I anticipated that. A ploy to get money, of course. How much?”

“I see that you inhabit the world, and go by the dictum, that every man has his price. I’m sure I do as well, but not in this instance.”

“Come on, Wolfe. My daughter was seen leaving this house not half an hour ago. I demand to know. I’m well within my rights to know if my daughter is in some kind of trouble with the law.”

“You may be within your rights to know, but I have no obligation to enlighten you.” Wolfe sipped his beer. “Let us look at this from another angle. You have, with whatever sources of information available to you, been informed that she was in my house. Patently, you have been having her followed, by another detective agency.”

“Yes. The Bascom agency. When they called and told me she was in here. I came straight over. I waited outside in my car and saw her leave. With that motley band of misfits and weirdoes. So I came in.”

“You would have done better to simply stop her and ask her what she was doing.”

“She wouldn’t have answered. She hardly ever speaks to me. And when she does, I can’t make any sense out of what she’s saying.”

“Indeed. I had a similar experience.”

“I send her money, every month. She certainly doesn’t refuse that. And that’s the only lifeline I have with her.” He seemed to lose a bit of his high-powered businessman persona. “I’ll take what I can get.”

“What has caused her animus?”

“God knows,” Van Sween replied. “She once called me a running dog lackey of the capitalist warmongers. Another time she called me unworthy of America’s million Trotskyites. What I should do is hire you to find that out. What her problem is with her father.”

we are told that Saul lived alone on the top floor of a remodeled house on 38th Street between Lexington and Third – just a couple of blocks down the street from where we are right now. The living quarters included a living room, bedroom, kitchenette, and bath. We may presume that this was the location of the weekly card games – initially pinochle, later poker – which Archie attended at Saul’s place.

His apartment is also used for business – a couple of times, it has provided sanctuary for Nero Wolfe himself, when he has been dodging the police. And, in A Family Affair, it is the scene for a critical meeting between Archie and the Irregulars as they try to figure out the best way to solve the central puzzle of that unhappy mystery. Once again, it is Saul who plays a critical role in devising the ultimate solution to the problem, seeing even more clearly than Archie what needs to be done to settle the affair.

It’s also worth noting that Wolfe trusted Saul enough to have him hold down the office and live in the South Room while he and Archie travel overseas to the Black Mountain.

When Saul is sent on an errand for Wolfe, he almost always gets his man – or woman. Not always, however; one of his rare failures happens in Death of a Doxy, where he is dispatched to a night club to question singer Julie Jaquette about a murder victim named Isabel Kerr. No go. Poor Saul calls the Brownstone, and he tells Archie,

I’m licked. I have met my match. Julie Jaquette. I would give a week’s pay to know if you could have handled her. The trouble is partly that Nero Wolfe’s a celebrity, so she says, but mostly it’s the orchids. If he will show her his orchids, she’ll tell him all about Isabel Kerr. She won’t tell me a damn thing. Nothing.

On the other hand, it gave Wolfe the chance to meet Julie Jaquette – one of the very few women in the Corpus whose company he really savors.

Perhaps Saul’s most useful skill, however, is his near-perfect memory for faces. In Too Many Cooks, for example, when he is brought into the room where all the suspects have been gathered, Archie observes,

After one look at Wolfe his sharp eyes darted around the rectangle of faces, and I knew that each of those phizzes had in that moment been registered in a portrait gallery where it would stay forever in place.
ing abilities. And when Nero Wolfe needs an operative to do something that he doesn’t want Archie to know about – for whatever reason – his first choice is usually Saul.

In fact, Archie rarely writes about him without demonstrating both his affection and respect. I think the best description comes in *Before Midnight*. Here’s what Archie says:

Saul is not a natural for Mr. America. His nose is twice as big as he needs, he never looks as if he had just shaved, one shoulder is half an inch higher than the other and they both slope, and his coat sleeves are too short. But if and when I find myself up a tree with a circle of man-eating tigers crouching on the ground below, and a squad of beavers starting to gnaw at the trunk of the tree, the sight of Saul approaching would be absolutely beautiful. I have never seen him fazed.

From Archie, that is high praise indeed.

And, of course, there are times when it can be a good thing to be a relatively small person. Saul must surely have been grateful for his size when, in *The Doorbell Rang*, he had to be smuggled into the Brownstone inside a packing crate just three feet wide, five feet long and two feet high. Even I would have some trouble getting into such a small space.

Saul is a free-lancer, but at one time he did work as a member of Wolfe’s regular staff. In *Fer-de-Lance*, Archie tells us that Saul (and Fred Durkin, for that matter) used to be on Wolfe’s payroll. When Wolfe had to cut back expenses because of the Depression, Archie says he and Saul got their weekly pay envelopes sliced, but Fred’s was stopped altogether. It certainly sounds as if they had been staff employees, just like Archie. But Saul prospers as a free-lancer, able to charge a lot more than the going rate for private eyes. Baring-Gould again tracks Saul’s reported daily rate as rising from $20 a day in 1945 to $80 a day in 1965 which in those days was pretty respectable money.

Saul has talents that you might not expect to find in the average private investigator. For example, he apparently is a licensed private pilot. In *Fer-de-Lance*, Archie complains that the man they have all been tailing plans to go flying in a private plane. He says the Irregulars might as well stay home and play pinochle, since they can’t fly. Wolfe’s reply, “Saul Panzer can. The clouds will have eyes.”

Unlike Wolfe and Archie, Saul is an Eastsider. One of the best descriptions of his apartment is in the novella “Fourth of July Picnic,” where

“I’m afraid,” Wolfe said, “that you would find my talents unsuited for that particular task.”

“We’ll discuss that later. What I want to know is if she is in some kind of trouble. She may dismiss me now, but if she can keep out of jail until she grows up, I might get her back. And I’m willing to step in and look after her until then. And I want to know, right now, if she is in immediate danger of arrest.” He reached into his briefcase. “Shall we say $5,000, for a retainer?”

Wolfe sighed. Having to work always did that to him.

“Mr. Van Sween, I must inform you that I already have a client. One who would be perfectly satisfied to see your daughter in danger of arrest.”

“Dump him. I can pay better,” Van Sween snapped, captain of industry having crept back in.

“It may not have to come down to a choice like that,” Wolfe said. “I cannot dump a client when a better paying one comes along. Such a mendacious about-face would ruin both my standing in my profession and my own self-esteem, both of which are considerable. But my current client has hired me to investigate a murder and place the blame on the guilty party. A certain — ”

“Murder??” Van Sween snapped. “Did you say murder??”

Wolfe nodded. “A man, an unpublished poet named Harold Harold, was murdered yesterday. My client is the main suspect. So, shifting the blame to your daughter is definitely an option.”

Van Sween was having a hard time taking this in. “But murder? Why would Elizabeth murder some poet? Why should anybody murder some poet, for crying out loud? Who cares two figs about them in the first place?”

“I couldn’t say, just yet,” Wolfe replied. “But think it only fair to tell you that she is not the first suspect on my list.”

“And how much,” Van Sween said, chairman of the board in full flower by now, “would it cost to keep her off the list altogether?”

Wolfe leaned back and exhaled. “That, sir, is not how I operate. I expose crimes without prejudice or monetary considerations. I am usually fortunate, or wily, enough to pick my clients with that in mind.”
“You mean you’ll take a client on only if you believe in their innocence?”

Wolfe nodded. “And I believe, although not with any certitude, from our brief acquaintance, that your daughter did not kill that man. The crime was not ineptly performed — fingerprints were wiped away, the murder weapon was removed — actions I would put well outside your daughter’s organizational skills.”

Van Sween didn’t take offense. In fact, he nodded in complete agreement.

“So, Wolfe, can you serve two masters? To do basically the same thing? I don’t mind telling you that Elizabeth is all right living in obscurity in the Village, quietly contemplating nothing. But as a suspect or a defendant in a murder trial — well, her real name would get into the papers! That would do my firm no small damage. So, I should think that my offer of a $5,000 retainer was not excessive.”

Wolfe didn’t either, of course. “I could accept that under the stipulation that I remain beholden to my original client to do the same thing. Find and expose the murderer, whoever it may be.”

“That’s understood,” Dunham said. He took out his checkbook.

When he had gone, Goodwin returned to the office.

“Gee,” he said. “That’s what I call fatherly love. His devotion to his daughter is such that he won’t let her sully the name of the firm. I hope he can write your fee off his income tax.”

Wolfe picked up his book. “Archie,” he said. “Have Saul here at 8:00 a.m.”

CHAPTER 7

I was sitting peacefully in the Café Wha?, having an espresso, listening to the piano player. In spite of all the worries I had about getting arrested, charged with murder, locked up on Death Row and marching down the last mile with some rented clergyman muttering in Latin, I had also been able to make some progress on my play. In fact, the negative emotions churning around inside me had somehow turned the second act into one of the best pieces of work I had ever done. And I had to admit, not having Harold around playing Judy Garland records and banging on pots was pretty blissful.

This paper was originally presented at the 2010 Black Orchid Assembly.

Saul Panzer: The Leader of the Pack
By Les Blatt

I want to spend a moment today turning a spotlight on someone who usually prefers to work unobtrusively and effectively in the background.

We all know that Nero Wolfe’s genius does not operate in a vacuum. Certainly, Wolfe could not function properly as an investigator of crime without Archie Goodwin’s arms and legs, not to mention his eyes, ears, and occasional firearms.

Wolfe also requires the services of other detectives who are employed as needed for an ongoing investigation. Wolfe’s biographer, William S. Baring-Gould, calls them the “35th Street Irregulars,” an obvious reference to the Baker Street Irregulars called upon by Sherlock Holmes. But Wolfe’s irregulars are no amateurs. They are all licensed private investigators. And — let’s be honest — they vary widely in their capabilities and personalities, at least as they are reported to us by Archie. Fred Durkin, for example, appears to be better equipped with brawn than brains. Orrie Cather has some serious character flaws, as we see in both Death of a Doxy and A Family Affair. And Archie’s prejudice against female detectives may make him less than fully reliable when he writes condescendingly about Dol Bonner. There is no shortage of secondary investigators to be relied upon with varying degrees of confidence.

But there is only one among the Irregulars who always rates Archie’s highest praise and Wolfe’s complete trust. And that is Saul Panzer, whom I refer to here as “The Leader of the Pack” — the pack of 35th Street Irregulars.

Now it is important to note — at least from my standpoint — that Saul is quite short in comparison to Archie. Saul stands only 5’ 7”. When you look at him, as Baring-Gould notes in his brief sketch of Saul, you can’t see his face for his nose. His suit generally needs pressing. But if Saul is not physically prepossessing, there is no other detective among the Irregulars who can claim Saul’s overwhelm-
It wouldn’t break any furniture of you just handed him this note. Honest, but I’m in a hurry. Be human. I’ve got a sister at home. Don’t read it yourself because there’s a swear-word in it.

— Archie Goodwin, Fer-de-Lance
looking completely unperturbed by anything, drinking free beer. He had struck up a conversation with Purley Stebbins about side arms.

Then Wolfe entered. He inclined his head a percentage point as he circled around to his desk.

“I thank you all for coming,” he said “with, of course, one exception. That exception is the murderer of Harold Harold.”

Most of the room gasped. Cramer, Goodwin, and Stebbins had obviously been briefed and merely looked at the other faces. Thin Lizzie had the loudest reaction.

“Far out.”

Wolfe nodded, as if he expected nothing less. He turned to the group.

“This will go faster without interruption. Six days ago Mr. Winthrop came here and engaged me to speak to his roommate, the late Mr. Harold, about Mr. Harold’s deliberate sabotage of a play that Mr. Winthrop had been generously commissioned to write. Mr. Goodwin, who, by the way, Mr. Van Sween, is not my servant. He is a highly competent private investigator. He, along with Mr. Winthrop, undertook a visit to the apartment shared by Mr. Winthrop and Mr. Harold. Upon arrival they found Mr. Harold’s body, a victim of a gunshot wound to the head.

“Well. The police were of a mind that Mr. Winthrop had staged the entire event, including the murder, intending to use what reputation Mr. Goodwin and I have to buttress his claims of innocence. I doubted that. I doubted that he would try and dupe two people who make their living by not being easily fooled. At the same time, there was a nagging thought that he could be a subtle, egotistical criminal, too clever by half, attempting to gull both us and the authorities. Accordingly, I dispatched another operative, Saul Panzer, who sits to your left, into the Village. Mr. Panzer, who is never gulled by anyone, went in the guise of one of the confused and somewhat artistically oriented denizens of that neighborhood, to find out what type of a man Mr. Winthrop was.”

“Oh, the hell you say,” Cramer rasped, almost good-naturedly. “Saul Panzer was reading poetry in basements?”

“He was playing whatever piano he could find, and he was, as always, keeping his ears and eyes open,” Wolfe said. “And, as is usually the case, he found what he was looking for. From what he told me, Mr. Winthrop possesses nowhere near enough cunning, nor even basic intelligence, to attempt something so ambitious.”

“Hey,” I said. “Like...”

—

A Toast to Archie Goodwin
By Kelle Ruden

I’d like to thank our hosts for inviting me to raise a glass at this wonderful dinner. I am especially pleased since so many of the Stout family members are in attendance. As a representative of the publisher of Archie Goodwin’s dossiers, I enthusiastically agreed to toast our favorite author at this fine event. Archie, for his entire career, has not only been the easiest author we’ve ever worked with — few demands, always meets his deadlines — he is one of our favorite storytellers. You see, at the end of the day, we’re in the business of sharing stories, and so the first step in that is to have stories worth sharing, and Archie is the consummate storyteller, as he himself will tell you. This is in addition to being employed by Mr. Wolfe as “secretary, bodyguard, office manager, assistant detective — and goat.”

I got a call from Archie a while ago asking if I “get poetry? You know rhymes.” I asked him what he meant and he switched gears asking if I knew of a cookbook for small game birds.

I found out what was going on when Archie came into the office, carrying a stack of pages. It turns out that in between meals Archie and his employer, Nero Wolfe, had gotten involved in a case involving a crafty writer named Paul Chapin. Writers and problems are a combination I am familiar with — though homicide is rarely involved. Well, sometimes, but I digress. The point is Archie had once again struck storytelling gold.

Archie repeated his frequent request that we increase his advance for his next story by thirty dollars and we eagerly agreed. Please raise your glass to the impeccably dressed, famously efficient, and quite handsome Mr. Archie Goodwin. Cheers!
thankfully outgoing rather than incoming, between boarding missions to inspect Taiwanese and Russian factory ships plying their trade in freezing Antarctic waters, and while waiting to fly a group of skydivers to 12,000 feet in a Cessna 182.

In short, Mr. Stout’s work has been a great comfort and escape to me in stressful or difficult times, and my life would have been vastly poorer had I not encountered it. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Mr. Stout.

Wolfe was reading three books at once. He had been doing that, off and on, all the years I had been with him, and it always annoyed me because it seemed ostentatious.

Archie Goodwin, Too Many Women

“If you please,” Wolfe said. “So, coming to the conclusion that Mr. Winthrop is indeed of no more than average intelligence — this is not meant to wound you, sir — ”

“Yeah, but...”

“So what sort of devastating, bold, forward thinking, and innovative theatre is such a man to create? Surely nothing worth $10,000.”

Wolfe sipped from his beer and I didn’t say anything.

“So, had he gulled Mr. Frederson? Had his most recent flop really been a work of undiscovered genius?”

“That seemed to the opinion of the world at large,” Wolfe said. “So why did Mr. Frederson bestow such an enormous sum on an unsuccessful and, at best, moderately talented writer? If you please?”

That was aimed at me. I was going to protest again. The thing that was getting under my skin was that, at least in theory, I was paying this guy.

“This is what I asked myself. I had almost nothing to go on, except a kernel of a clue. Mr. Winthrop said that he had come from Michigan, and was a high school friend of Mr. Harold. Is that true, Mr. Winthrop?”

“Uh, yeah,” I said, “but that doesn’t mean...”

“Please,” Wolfe said. “Allow me to describe this properly. I also noted that Mr. Frederson was the heir to a motor coach trailer fortune. Motor City Truck Trailers. It is a well-known firm, even here, and its Detroit location is common knowledge. So it was not unreasonable to assume that Mr. Frederson, Mr. Winthrop, and Mr. Harold may have been previously acquainted, or connected in some way.”

Wolfe pushed his buzzer suddenly and the door opened. A tall guy, handsome and as dapper as Goodwin, walked in.

“I would like to introduce Orville Cather, a private investigator in my employ. Mr. Cather has been in Michigan, investigating the possibility of such a connection. Mr. Cather?”

Handsome cleared his throat. “In September of 1949 there was an industrial fire at one of the Motor City Truck Trailer assembly plants, in Detroit. Two people were burned to death. Mr. Frederson, at the time,
was the plant manager. He was learning the family business. When the fire hit he ran out of the building without helping in any way. It wasn’t actionable, but it was called an extraordinary act of cowardice. One of the newspapers compared him to the men who put on dresses to get on a lifeboat when the Titanic went down.

“Mr. Frederson was never charged with anything, but he was blackballed from the automotive aristocracy, starting with the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club. He left town under a cloud, and spent two years in a European kind of exile, arriving here in 1953.

“Then he basically paid his way into the New York artistic circles, and no one was ever curious enough to find out more about him.”

“Thank you, Mr. Cather.” Wolfe looked at Frederson. “Here, in a new society, you could again hold up your head. It is easy enough to earn respect — indeed, awe — by donating what seemed like huge sums to the arts. And that explained your generosity toward Mr. Winthrop. You didn’t care where you tossed your money. It was all the same to you. You had no idea that Mr. Winthrop was from Michigan, or that his roommate would recognize you.

“Yes. Mr. Harold, as struggling artists do, was working in a factory in 1949. Your factory. And while you didn’t know him, he certainly knew you. In a small social gathering, he would have recognized you. He did pester you that evening, as you said, and it did regard his epic poem, but he also mentioned that he had seen you before. At your factory. He told you that he knew who you were, and insinuated what might happen if you didn’t finance his epic.”

“Would you like to comment, sir?”

Frederson did, but not to the point. “Mr. Winthrop’s plays, as I said, open a creative manner of thinking that is otherwise blocked. Your remarks do nothing of the sort.”

“Waggish but irrelevant,” Wolfe replied. “It is not beyond belief that Mr. Harold saw the kind of opportunity he had dreamed about his entire life. Here was a wealthy patron of the arts with a dirty secret.”

“Every artist’s dream,” said Holstein, wistfully. “A rich guy to squeeze.”

“Exactly, Mr. Holstein. Which I believe Mr. Harold proceeded to do. But he had picked the wrong patron.”

A Toast to Rex Stout
By Gordon Jackson

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I begin by stating that it is an pleasure and an honour to have been asked to give the toast to Mr. Stout and I thank you for the opportunity at this, my first Black Orchid Banquet, the 33rd this body, so to speak, has hosted. This is also indeed my first visit to New York and my first proper visit to the United States, that is, on vacation rather than as crew of a visiting warship.

It is a journey of eight hours by Virgin Atlantic Airbus from London, where I live, to New York. However the journey to this moment for me has been much, much longer. I first encountered Mr. Stout, Nero Wolfe, Archie, and Fritz many years ago when I was a teenager living in a small town in New Zealand. I was a voracious reader and one day I picked up one of my father’s books, a paperback with a garish cover depicting a bloody corpse. It was, I recall, Over My Dead Body, and I was hooked from that moment on. In New Zealand at that time British culture ruled the roost, so more Wolfe was hard to come by. I quickly exhausted the limited supply from the local library and began a quest to obtain as much of the Corpus as possible.

A habit of haunting new and second-hand book purveyors from Auckland to Bangkok and from Johannesburg to Glasgow and beyond ensued, and in those dim and distant pre-internet days yielded results beyond wildest hope. The entire Corpus was eventually acquired, even including a few first editions, plus the cookbook. Sadly all those volumes now reside in boxes in New Zealand, awaiting eventual, but hopefully not too distant, retrieval and removal to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Stout’s books have accompanied me to all corners of the globe including sub Antarctic Islands and a Pacific island that would have been dear to Fritz’s heart. Raoul Island is now uninhabited by humans, but the wild pigs that roam there feed mostly on oranges fallen from trees planted long ago by settlers and long since abandoned. This gives their meat a unique taste and texture, enjoyed by the few visitors to the island. I have enjoyed Mr. Stout’s work while taking a break from the thunderous hammering of Naval Gunfire Support rounds,
were dedicated to her. Francis met and married his wife Mary Margaret, a university educated schoolmistress, in 1947. She was his researcher par excellence, exploring whatever specialized fields were needed, from painting to the wine trade to the air transport of horses. "She was the moving force behind my writing," he said upon her death in 2000.

Finally, television series and movies were made of their novels: the *Spencer for Hire* series with Robert Urich, seven made-for-TV movies on the Jesse Stone books starring Tom Selleck, and the movie western *Appaloosa*. Francis's first novel, *Dead Cert*, was made into a feature film; the public television series *Mystery!* adaptations doubled the sales of his books in the United States.

So, let us all raise our glasses in a heartfelt toast to the lives and accomplishments of two writers we will sorely miss: Robert Parker and Dick Francis.

Wolfe turned to face Cramer. "Mr. Cramer, I haven't asked, but allow me a guess. The rubber gloves you found at the crime scene contained neither fingerprints nor residue from gunpowder. Is that the case?

Cramer nodded slowly. "You knew that because we haven't put the arm on your beatnik."

"Quite true, sir. I had every confidence in your ability to analyze that particular clue, which of course turned out to be no clue at all. Thank you."

Wolfe buzzed again. Mutt and Jeff came in. A real big guy, bald, wearing a striped tie and a cheap suit with wide checks, accompanied by a little guy in a cloth cap and a windbreaker with a hackie's badge.

"I would like to introduce Mr. Fred Durkin, another investigator in my employ. With him is Mr. Morris Horwitz, who operates a Manhattan taxicab." He turned to the cabbie. "Mr. Horwitz?"

Horwitz blinked. "Yeh?" With that one word everyone in the room knew what kind of guy he was. A short, feisty type of hackie with loud, unalterable views on everything, the kind you get late at night when you're too tired to argue.

"Do you recognize anybody in this room?"

"Sure. The gentleman right there, with the gray suit." He pointed at Frederson. "Two days ago I picked him up on Park Avenue and I took him into the Village at 3:15 p.m. 128 MacDougal Street."

Cramer jumped up. "Just a minute! Horwitz, how do you happen to know exactly when?"

Horowitz jumped a bit himself. Wolfe cut in.

"This gentleman is a police officer, Inspector Cramer from Homicide South."

"I know a cop when I hears one," Horwitz said. "I looked it up, officer, when Durkin here came around looking for whoever took a fare from Park Avenue to the Village. I looked in my record books to be sure, so I remembered the time then."

"Durkin offered a reward?" Cramer snapped.

"Sure he did. But he didn’t tell me what for. It had to jibe with my fare sheet, which I had already turned in."
“Durkin showed you a picture and got you to ID this man?” Cramer pressed.
“Nah. He asked me to describe the fare here, which I done. Then he brought me here and I seen him. I mean this guy here in the gray suit.” He looked at Frederson. “How do you do, sir? Nice to see you again. Hope this don’t lead you to no trouble.”

Cramer sat back down.

“I wasn’t aware that hiring a taxi in New York City constituted suspicious behavior,” Frederson said.

No one responded. Wolfe wagged a finger.

“Mr. Frederson, this places you on very dangerous ground. This places you well within the category of opportunity. And we have, I should think, established motive. It leads one to believe that Mr. Harold had indeed recognized you at the gathering. You had given your grant to the wrong refugee from Michigan, and Mr. Harold wasn’t having it. So he demanded a meeting and a payoff, at his flat the next day.

“Mr. Cather has photocopied employment records that state one Harold Hrdlicka was indeed employed at your former firm at the time of the 1949 fire. Mr. Cramer, what was Mr. Harold’s real name?”

“Harold Hrdlicka,” Cramer said, fixing Frederson with a very serious stare. Stebbins did better than that, he walked over and stood behind him.

“I knew it was you!” Linda cried. “Anybody that would pay Ralph Winthrop money to write plays is capable of anything!”

It’s a good thing Stebbins had moved. Frederson bolted out of his chair and made a running grab at her throat. Stebbins leapt forward and grabbed him, and wrestled him to the ground. He pulled out handcuffs and applied them.

Montieth looked startled, but it didn’t shut her up.

“Just what I thought, Frederson! You don’t know art! You killed a promising young poet — ”

“Art??” Frederson snarled. “You imbeciles don’t make art! You can’t spell art! You lay around in filthy hovels convinced that you’re the next Lord Byron! You drink cheap beer! You play bongos! You criticize the real world! And you expect people like me to pay for it!

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**A Tribute to Two Fallen Writers**

By Marge Baxter Levine

Early this year we lost two of the most prolific and popular mystery writers of the last 50 years: Robert Parker and Dick Francis. Robert Parker died January 18th at age 77, and Dick Francis died on February 14th at the age of 89.

They had much in common, in addition to the fact that their books became best-sellers. Both settled on a flawed knight-errant as their hero: Spencer (no first name) and Sid Halley and his many iterations.

Although Parker wrote more than 60 books, including westerns and young-adult novels, Spencer was his signature creation. The first pages of his first Spencer novel (The Godwulf Manuscript, 1973) revealed much of what we came to love about Spencer — his impatience with pomposity, his smart-alecky wit, his self-awareness and supreme self-confidence. He was faithful in love to Susan Silverman, and in friendship to the morally idiosyncratic Hawk. He agonized over the Red Sox and enjoyed cooking. Both Parker and Spencer had complicated love relationships as well as several dogs, all named Pearl. In essence, Spencer was Parker’s alter ego.

In his more than 40 novels, Francis’s heroes tended to be lonely men, often widowed or divorced; they were frequently beaten up or injured, but they strove doggedly in their pursuit of the villains, who were often sadistic and violent to both man and beast.

Both wrapped their books around a love of place, in Parker’s case, Boston and New England (with a few exceptions), and the British thoroughbred racing turf where Dick Francis was born (his father was a horse-dealer and steeplechaser; Francis learned to ride by age 5, and won his first race at 8).

Both Francis and Parker acknowledged the influence of their wives. Parker met Joan when they were three, or so the story goes; they married in 1956; their relationship reflected that of Susan and Spencer; his books...
“Damn every one of you!” he yelled, as Cramer and Stebbins led him away.

Lizzie, as the cops dragged Frederson away, had the last word.

“Like, that was really far out.”

EPILOGUE

I had to testify at Frederson’s trial, of course, as did Goodwin, Linda, and everyone else but Wolfe. Wolfe apparently hates bestirring himself on official — or any other — business, and usually manages to get away with a sworn affidavit. The District Attorney really raked me over, because the 10 grand was already in my bank account, and they thought it might color my testimony.

But there wasn’t much I could say either for or against his guilt, and as it turned out, the DA could have saved himself the worry. But this whole affair changed us all, and no one more than Thin Lizzie. She actually started writing her poems down, starting with one to Wolfe, which she called “Ode to a Man Shaped like a Grecian Urn.”

Goodwin sent her a nice note of thanks:

“Dear Elizabeth, Mr. Wolfe and I both thank you for the poem. It was, I think I can say without fear of contradiction, truly far out.”